

THE EVOLUTION OF THE DIPLOMA OF PUBLIC HEALTH.

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The paper which I have the privilege of presenting to this Society was read, with the approval of the Right Hon. President and Council, at the State Medicine Section of the Academy of Medicine of Ireland in January of the present year and discussed by some of the leading Sanitarians of Ireland. A short abstract of the paper with a full account of the discussion was published in the medical journals.

In the first place I would refer in terms of gratitude to the author of *The Historical Memoirs of this Society*, Mr. S. Shannon Millin, for the lucid arrangement and the copious information which his work affords and which show that the amalgamation of this Society with the Social Society of Ireland in 1855 opened the door for those interested in the great work of Public Health to express their views to the community. It has also occurred to me that I would suggest to the Trustees of the Barrington Fund that Public Health may be brought under the scope of Political Economy, and that in future the Barrington Lecturer be asked to deliver lectures on Public Health and administration, particularly in the country towns. This suggestion is strengthened by the consideration of the enormous volume of administrative work which now appertains to the Department of the Ministry of Health.

It appears from Mr. Millin's index that the first paper of a distinctly Public Health character was read by Mr. William Hogan in the year 1849. Numerous papers followed. The Vital Statistics of the Country were ably presented by Dr. T. W. Grimshaw, C.B., Sir Robert Matheson and Sir William Thompson, M.D., during their respective periods of office.

In this connection I may remark on the announcement of the Registrar-General for England and Wales that the Infant Mortality rate has declined to 77 per 1,000 for the year 1922. This will gratify those who have thought and worked to this end. In the quinquennial period, 1896-1900, the average infant mortality rate was 156; it fell in the succeeding quinquennial period to 138; to 117 in the 5-yearly period, 1905-10;

to 110 in the following period, 1910-15, and to 90 in 1915-20. It further declined in the year 1921 to 83, and again, in 1922, to 77 deaths in each 1,000 births. Dr. James Wheatley's paper on this subject and the discussion thereupon at the Annual Meeting of the B.M.A. are worth perusal (*B.M.J.*, Oct. 27). Dr. Wheatley has produced tables showing the relation between the decline in the death-rate of infants and the working of such remedial Acts as the Education Act, 1870; Public Health Act, 1875; Housing Working Classes, 1890; Midwives Act, 1902; Education Act, 1907; Notification of Births Act, 1907; Childrens Act, 1908; National Insurance Act, Tuberculosis Order, 1911; Notification of Births, 1915; V. D. Regulations, 1916; Maternity and Child Welfare Act, 1918.

In the same year, 1922, in the Irish Free State the Infant Mortality was 69, and in Northern Ireland 77 per 1,000 births.

Dr. Wheatley does not give the legislative measure credit for the decrease, but attributes it to the improvement in general education and the raising of the intelligence of the parents. He forgets, however, that the working of the Remedial Acts is included in the term General Education.

The tardy evolution of the Diploma of Public Health may be traced from the proceedings of the General Medical Council. In a resolution dated 5th June, 1867, it was proposed that in order to encourage the study of Hygiene and State Medicine "an additional qualification be instituted, which may be registered." This was, however, negatived. In the following year Dr. George Harley, F.R.S., proposed to change the title of Forensic Medicine to State Medicine, and suggested the following subjects for study and examination: Toxicology, Insanity, Injuries, Principles of Life Insurance, Medical Evidence, and Sanitary Science. He insisted that medical knowledge should be made subservient to the State by means of highly qualified medical experts. In the same year the first Public Health Committee was appointed by the Council, and a Report was presented, which was followed by a second, after evidence had been taken from various sources where special knowledge of the subject could be obtained. The following names appear as constituting the first P. H. Committee: Drs. Acland, Paget, Thompson, Aquilla Smith, Parkes, Rumsey, Christison, and William Stokes.

At this stage an impetus was given to the G.M.C. in the form of a memorial from the B.M.A. The G.M.C. then resolved that Diplomas or Certificates ought to be granted after due examination to persons who were already or would be hereafter entered on the Medical Register, but to no others.

At the same time it was proposed to seek statutory powers. This was opposed, but was ultimately carried. It was ably supported by Professor Stokes. This report was dated July 7th, 1869, and forwarded to the Licensing Bodies. It is a gratifying record that Dublin University replied, stating that it had already resolved to create a qualification in State Medicine (1st March, 1870). Following the Resolution of the B.M.C. the Board of Trinity College carried out a plan for establishing a Diploma in State Medicine, and the following letter was addressed to the *B.M.J.* by Professor Stokes:—

September 10th, 1870.

“ Sir,—In your educational number of September 10th, 1870, you have, in detailing the arrangements of Dublin University, noticed the qualifications in State or Preventive Medicine lately instituted by the Board of Trinity College. This qualification is intended to be one of a high order; it is to be conferred after examination, in subjects set forth in the accompanying document, on candidates who have graduated in Arts and taken the higher degrees in Medicine. I beg to append the statement of the subjects of study recommended to such candidates.”

WM. STOKES.

The first examination in State Medicine for the new Diploma took place on the 12th June, 1871. There were four candidates—1, Arthur Wynne Foot; 2, John William Moore; 3, John Todhunter; and 4, Gerald Yeo. All were successful.

The Examiners and Teachers for the first examination were:—Prof. William Stokes, State Medicine; Prof. Galbraith, Vital Statistics; Prof. Law and Dr. Downing, Hygiene; Prof. Leslie, Meteorology; Prof. R. W. Smith, Pathology; Prof. Travers, Med. Jurisprudence; Prof. Apjohn, Chemistry; The Regius Prof., Civil Law, Sanitary Law.

It is a matter of interest that not only in Dublin University but also in the remote districts of Ireland a spirit of progress existed, as may be gathered from the following: In the year 1869 a meeting of the Medical Officers of Sligo and Leitrim presented a memorial on the subject of Public Health Administration to the Chief Secretary, the Right Hon. C. P. Fortescue. At the meeting the chair was taken by Dr. W. R. Hamilton, and the memorial was drawn up by Dr. F. Tucker, of Sligo. In speaking, the Venerable Archdeacon Gould said: “ My respect and admiration for the noble Profession of Medicine pleads my apology for advocating means to improve the sanitary conditions of the country and to elevate the status of the profession in our native land.”

Reverting to the proceedings of the G.M.C., a report was adopted in 1870 to have statutory clauses for the purpose of the new diploma introduced into a Bill amending the existing Medical Act, and in 1871 an amendment for the registration of the D.P.H. was proposed. This important matter was again brought up in 1873 by Professor Stokes and Dr. Quain, and the Registrar was directed to address Dublin University on the subject.

In the year 1874 it was decided that "The qualification of Public Analyst may be held separately or as a part of the duty of a Medical Officer of Health."

In 1875 the Hebdomadal Council of the University of Oxford reported that "It is expedient to provide or assist in providing an examination in the subject called 'State Medicine,' and that the Diploma be granted by a conjoint examination by all the Licensing Bodies."

Following a report in 1876 the G.M.C. decided that after the 1st January, 1880, "No candidate for the appointment of M.O.H. be eligible unless able to produce a special Diploma in State Medicine." And in the same year, consequent on a memorandum from the G.M.C., it was decided to insert in the Bill introduced by Mr. Gibson (afterwards Lord Ashbourne) "That such qualification should be established and registered."

The Rev. Samuel Haughton, F.T.C.D., joined the G.M.C. in the year 1878 as representative of Dublin University.

The University of Durham applied for registration in the year 1885. As the result of a memorial from the Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association, this was signed by Arthur Ransome, M.D., a notable pioneer of sanitary reform.

The year 1886 was remarkable for the passing of the Medical Act, which was proposed so far back as 1870. Following this important statute, it was resolved by the G.M.C. that such steps as may be necessary be taken concerning the *registration* of certificates and diplomas in sanitary science in this year 1886. The Irish College of Physicians forwarded their scheme for a D.P.H. signed by John W. Moore, Registrar, and a letter from Sir J. Fayer, K.C.S.I., regarding the nomenclature of the diploma and subject was discussed. The regulations of the following Licensing Bodies were approved in the year 1887: 1, C. P. Ireland; 2, U. of Durham; 3, U. of Aberdeen; 4, U. of Cambridge; 5, U. of London; 6, U. of Glasgow; 7, U. of Edinburgh; 8, U. of Oxford; 9, C. P. Edinburgh; 10, C. P. London; 11, C. S. Ireland. The application of the Apothecaries' Hall, London, was postponed.

An important advance in administration was made in the year 1888 by the proposed appointment of an Inspector of Examinations. The matter was referred to the P. H. Committee for report. The variations in the regulations of the different Licensing Bodies was brought under notice by the Public Health Society of London. This was forwarded to each body, with a request for their remarks thereupon.

In the year 1889 the G.M.C. gave authority to the various Licensing Bodies to present a registrable qualification in 1, State Medicine; or in 2, Sanitary Science; or in 3, Public Health.

The opinion of counsel was taken as to whether the person examined for the diploma must be a registered medical practitioner before being admitted for examination and was legally confirmed. An investigation of the regulations for practical instruction resulted in an amendment of these.

The approval of Council was granted to twelve Licensing Bodies who had conformed to resolutions of the Council (1889) and the consideration of four bodies who had not replied was postponed.

In 1891 the proficiency of instruction in practical sanitary work engaged the attention of the Council, in conference with the L.G.B. of England and Wales. Also the courses of practical instruction in laboratories, and in this year the conjoint examination of the Irish Colleges was proposed.

In 1892 the important regulation, that a period of one year should elapse between the registration of medical degrees and the examination for D.P.H. was confirmed, and in 1893 the Report of the P. H. Committee, recommending (1) 12 months' interval, (2) 6 months' laboratory instruction in Chemistry, Bacteriology and Pathology of diseases in animals, (3) 6 months' attendance with a M.O.H., to come into force after January 1st, 1894, was adopted. The inspection of examinations was also carried, and the first Inspector, G. F. Duffey, was appointed.

In 1895 the names of Dr. the Rev. S. Haughton, F.T.C.D., Sir P. C. Smyly and Dr. John W. Moore are included in the P. H. Committee.

In 1895 the Inspector furnished his first report confirming that of the P. H. Committee made in 1893, and, in addition, recommending that there should be a practical examination in Bacteriology, a Clinical Examination in Infective Disease, an outdoor examination in Sanitary Work, and a practical examination in Sanitary Engineering. The rules as revised were adopted in the following year.

In Sec. 22 of the Scottish Public Health Bill (1896) the Sanitary Inspector was placed on an equality with the M.O.H.—presumably from want of medical supervision in the framing of the Act. This grave error was, however, amended by an Order of Council as follows: “That to place the opinion of a sanitary inspector in matters where a judgment has to be formed—as to what is or what is not liable to constitute ‘a danger to public health’—on a statutory equality with that of the medical officer of health—was calculated to seriously frustrate the efforts of the Council to ensure a distinctively high standard of proficiency in the public health service.”

In 1898 the question of the diversities of interpretation of the course of study by the various licensing bodies was introduced by Sir William Gardiner and duly considered by the Medical Council, and in the following year the regulations of the University of St. Andrew’s were accepted, and in 1900 the suggestions for the alterations in the rules proposed in 1895 were amended and discussed. In the year following (1901) an application for the recognition of teaching Public Health in India was made by Major Weir, I.M.S. This was, however, postponed on the grounds of deficiency in laboratory instruction and accommodation, with a suggestion that Army Medical Officers be granted “special leave” for the purpose of taking the Diploma in Public Health.

In 1902 the new regulations were adopted, and in 1903 the Presidency of Bombay was recognised as a Military Sanitary District; also provision was made by the Metropolitan Asylum’s Board for the provision of instruction at the fever hospitals under its control.

The enactment of the Public Health Officers Bill took place in 1905. This made the D.P.H. obligatory for a public health appointment, unless the candidate had for three years held the appointment of M.O.H. over an area containing 50,000 inhabitants, and that the appointment was approved by the L.G.B. This Act also regulated the scope and appointment of sanitary inspectors.

In 1908 a proposed change in the probationary period from 12 months to 9 months was rejected by the Council.

In the year 1910 Lord Crewe forwarded a report from the Tropical Diseases Research Committee asking that Sec. 21 of the Medical Act, 1886, be amended as follows: That after the words “State Medicine,” “or in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene” be inserted. The question of registration of Medical Degrees before a D.P.H. is granted was referred to Council for the second time.

In the year 1911 the P. H. Committee recommended the following alterations in the regulations for the D.P.H. : 1, That six months to be spent in Public Health Administration, overlapping three months with work in Public Health Laboratories, not less than sixty attendances being required, be reduced to three months with thirty attendances, if the student has attended instruction in (1) Sanitary Law; (2) Vital Statistics, Epidemiology and School Hygiene, with residence in a fever hospital for three months. This received the approval of the G.M.C. in 1914.

In the following year the regulations of the University of Liverpool were accepted, and an application from the Royal Institute of Public Health was refused. The Medical Officers' Superannuation Act was passed in this year.

An oral report was made to the Council in the year 1915 by the P. H. Committee, and statistics of the results of examinations called for; an interim report was furnished in 1916.

In the same year the Council decided to modify the regulations to meet the conditions which obtained as the result of the war, and it was decided—(1) That service in a Base Hygiene Laboratory would count for four months' instruction; (2) also that duty in Military Fever Hospital would be accepted, and at the suggestion of the Metropolitan Asylums' Board the number of attendances was reduced from 24 to 12. Tables were published this year showing that 56 candidates for the D.P.H. were successful, and the rejections numbered 22. The application of two captains serving in the field for relief under alternative arrangements was granted.

In the year 1919 Sir George Newman became a member of the Public Health Committee, and a report was presented by the Education Committee on the teaching of the Preventive aspects of Medicine by Drs. McVail and Elliott Smith, recommending instruction to medical students on the duties that devolve on medical practitioners in relation to the State and on the generally recognised rules of medical ethics. It was also ordered that all examinations be inspected and that no concessions be granted; also that the Admiralty be advised to allow nine months' "study leave" to junior surgeons to enable them to qualify for the D.P.H. At this period there were in Great Britain and Ireland 22 registrable qualifications in public health. Among these there is a considerable want of uniformity regarding the title of the qualifications. For instance, in the University of Durham there are three grades—(1) Licentiate, (2) Bachelor or Doctor, and (3) Diplomate. In London U. there are two—(1) Certificate, and (2) M.D.—in State Medicine. In

Manchester two—(1) Doctor in Sanitary Science, and (2) D.P.H. In Liverpool two—(1) D.P.H. and Master in Hygiene. In Edinburgh and Glasgow—(1) Bachelor and Doctor of Sanitary Science, and (2) D.P.H.

In this year a request from the War Office, asking for concessions for students serving with the colours, was negatived.

In 1920 Dr. Bruce Low was appointed Inspector of Examinations, and the P. H. Committee reported advising the revision of the existing regulations. The revised rules were adopted (the former having been in existence since 1889, with amendments in 1911) on the 25th November, 1922, to come into force on the 1st January, 1924.

The lamented death of Dr. Bruce Low occurred in the year 1922, not before he had completed his arduous task and furnished his able report. Dr. Bruce Low won the respect and sympathy of all who had the advantage of meeting him during the period of his inspection in Ireland.

In conclusion, I will not attempt to supply the reasons that caused the delay of more than fifty years in developing the status of the Diploma in Public Health. It certainly did not occur from want of knowledge or energy amongst the representatives of Ireland in the Medical Council, amongst whom the names of Professor Stokes, the Rev. Samuel Haughton, Sir George Duffey and Sir John W. Moore are conspicuous. The rules now in force are familiar to all, and, arising from these, the following points might, I venture to suggest, be usefully discussed at this meeting :—

Recommendations arising on the rules which came into force on the 1st January, 1924 :—

(a) Uniformity in education, examination and nomenclature of degree granted for all Universities and Colleges.

(b) Formation of a State Public Health Medical Service.

(c) Combination between the Irish Universities and Colleges for instruction and examination in the Public Health qualifications.

(d) Definition of the scope of Dr. McVail's proposal recommending instruction to medical students on the duties that devolve on medical practitioners in relation to the State and on the generally recognised rules of Medical Ethics.